

PERIODIC REVIEWS AT PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

GUIDANCE FOR PANEL MEMBERS AND COURSE TEAMS

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW

1. Introduction to Periodic Reviews

Periodic Review is the formal process by which a course or group of related courses is evaluated, and the University assured of the continuing quality of provision at the Partner Institution. The process normally takes place every five years and is the basis for re-approval of the courses with effect from the following academic year. The review process can be brought forward where there is a major variation to a course, or where a particular concern has been identified. Internal and external peer review is a normal part of Periodic Review, as it is of the initial approval or validation process.

Periodic Review provides an overview of the course(s) and allows external and internal subject experts to consider the cohesion of the courses offered and their relationship to each other as well as the validity of individual courses. This process can also provide course teams with an opportunity to review the breadth of their provision and evaluate developments across their subject area.

2. The purpose of Periodic Review

The purpose of Periodic Review is:

- to review the continuing validity and relevance of the stated aims and the intended learning outcomes of the course(s), in accordance with relevant external reference points (including the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education¹ see Section 3).
- to ensure that the awards conferred by the University are of an equivalent standard to comparable awards throughout the UK, and that threshold standards are being achieved (see Section 3).
- to ensure that students continue to be provided with learning opportunities of an appropriate quality.
- to enable an external subject expert or experts to contribute advice on the course(s).
- to identify exceptional practice for wider dissemination.
- to identify areas for enhancement.
- to audit the procedures for quality assurance and enhancement and the maintenance of academic standards as they apply to the course(s) under review.
- to report to the Partnerships Education Committee (PEC) with a specific, reasoned recommendation about the future of the course(s) under review. Approval of the Panel's and PEC's recommendations rests with Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC).

The areas explored during a periodic review event are set out in Section 2.

¹ <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code>

3. Periodic Review documentation

The most important document for the periodic review event is the reflective document provided by the course team(s) for the programmes under review. This should take the form of a critical commentary cross-referenced to any other documentation provided and should identify those issues the course team would find it helpful to explore in greater depth.

The structure of the reflective document should correspond to the broad agenda themes for periodic review and should be accompanied by supporting information, which is referred to in the reflective document.

For professional doctorate or postgraduate research degree provision, the reflective document should also cover how the course team's arrangements comply with the University's Code of Practice on Professional Doctorates and/or the University's Code of Practice on Postgraduate Research Degrees. Further details about the additional documentation requirements for the periodic review of professional doctorates and postgraduate research degree provision at partner institutions can be found in the periodic review documentation checklist.

In preparation for periodic review the course team is required to submit all relevant documentation to the partnerships team in an agreed electronic format at least six weeks in advance of the periodic review. For international partnerships, all documentation should be submitted in English. A longer timescale may be required where professional or accrediting bodies are involved.

Once the documentation has been received the partnerships team will compile a periodic review pack and distribute this electronically to all panel members. A printed version will be provided to members of the panel upon request. The periodic review pack will typically contain the following:

- Introduction and background to the partnership
- Agenda
- List of panel members
- Guidance for panel members
- Review documentation

4. Periodic Review Panel

Membership of Periodic Review Panels is designed around the range of courses and provision under review and will account for aspects such as professional body accreditation and requirements. A variety of experience and views should be available among the Panel members. Members will normally be dissociated from the delivery of the course(s), but within the Panel as a whole there should be sufficient understanding of the subject matter and academic context to enable the Panel to make a sound judgement.

As a minimum, in addition to the Chair, the Panel will include an external academic subject expert, a University academic member of staff, a representative from the Partner Institution and a student representative. Where relevant, external Panel members will include representatives from Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) and employer/industry representatives.

Periodic review panels are appointed by the Dean of Partnerships after consultation with the course team at the partner institution. Each panel is normally constituted as follows:

- Dean or Deputy Dean of Partnerships, University of Essex, or nominee (chair)
- at least one academic subject expert from outside the University and its partner institutions
- one employer or professional body representative (where relevant, e.g. for vocational or professional programmes)

- at least one student representative (normally currently registered on one of the courses under review, although a recent graduate of an undergraduate course who has progressed to postgraduate study may alternatively be appointed)
- at least one member external to the course team concerned but internal to the partner institution
- at least one member of the University's teaching staff, where possible from a cognate discipline area
- a partnerships manager from the partnerships team (secretary)

The University is responsible for identifying the external academic expert(s) and internal members of the review panel. The partner institution concerned is responsible for nominating all other members of the review panel, including the employer and/or professional body representative. These nominations should be submitted to the partnerships team and are subject to approval by the Dean of Partnerships and/or the chair of the event.

The following criteria are normally applied to the selection of external academics to be members of periodic review panels. The external academic panel member:

- should be a senior academic currently employed in a substantive role at a higher education institution with degree awarding powers
- should have relevant subject expertise and current experience of delivering provision at the same level as the course(s) being reviewed
- should not be a previous student or previous member of academic staff of the University or any collaborative provision partner institution, unless at least five years have elapsed between leaving the University or partner institution and the date of the review event
- should not be a current or previous external examiner employed by the University to oversee provision at the University or any partner institution, unless at least five years have elapsed between ceasing employment as an external examiner and the date of the review event
- should not have any conflict of interest arising from links with the University or relevant partner institution, or from personal or professional relationships with members of staff or students at the University or relevant partner institution
- should, where more than one external academic is included on the panel, be from a different institution to any other external representative
- should normally reside in the UK (approval to appoint a panel member from outside the UK will be granted only exceptionally, usually in the case of international partnerships).

5. Duties of the Periodic Review Panel

It is the duty of the Review Panel to:

- critically examine the review documentation and undertake discussion with the course team.
- make a collective judgement on the continuing quality and academic standard of the course(s) under review, to ensure that the award(s) conferred by the University are of an equivalent standard to comparable awards throughout the UK, and that UK threshold standards (see Section 3) are being achieved.
- review the quality of the learning opportunities and information that is provided to students.
- review the partner institution's procedures for quality assurance and enhancement and the maintenance of academic standards as they apply to the course(s) under review

- Confirm that all areas which should be explored during Periodic Review are covered in discussion during the event or sufficiently covered in the documentation.
- make a recommendation as to whether the course(s) should be reapproved.

The Panel will need to be assured of the continuing rationale for the course(s) concerned and that the course team has the necessary resource base for the continued successful running of the course(s). In addition, the Panel would expect to be assured that issues identified through annual review of courses, including the comments of students and external examiners, and issues from other sources (e.g. Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body reports), have been addressed.

6. Roles of the members of the Panel

The External Academic Expert

Every Periodic Review has at least one External Panel member. As an External Panel member, the role is to examine:

- the currency of the curriculum.
- the appropriateness of the curriculum in relation to national benchmarks and similar provision at other HEIs.
- the appropriateness of the strategy for assessment.
- the quality of the student experience.

The Employer Representative

Where programmes have a strong vocational focus and where work-based learning is involved, the Periodic Review Panel should include one or more representatives from a relevant industry. As the Employer Representative, the role is to examine:

- the relevance of the programme to the industry.
- the content to ensure it reflects its current and future needs and recognised standards.
- whether the work-based learning offers appropriate experience.
- whether the graduates of the programme will have the skills and knowledge that an employer would wish to see.

Internal Panel members

All Periodic Review Panels include an academic member of staff from the University and a representative from the Partner Institution. The Internal Partner Institution Panel member is not expected to be able to comment on subject specific content, but experience of their institution's practice in relation to learning, teaching and assessment should enable them to:

- critically evaluate the periodic review documentation.
- identify possible issues or good practice.
- comment on how the course team has responded to the University's institutional strategic developments as outlined in the Education Strategy.
- ask questions about particular areas of responsibility or interest (for example assessment methods).
- comment on the quality of the student experience and information they would be provided with

A Student Representative

Every Periodic Review should have a Student Representative Panel member. As the Student Representative, the role is to:

- contribute to discussions from the perspective of a student's experience.
- help to ensure that the Periodic Review takes due regard of student opinion.

7. Course team

The course team that meets the Panel:

- helps the Panel understand the Periodic Review documentation and gain a greater insight into the course team's ethos and approach to learning, teaching and assessment.
- takes a dispassionate view of both the weaknesses and the strengths of the course(s) under review.
- should be prepared to engage in constructive discussions with the Periodic Review Panel.

8. Preparation for Periodic Reviews

Panels may find it helpful to use the checklist below to guide their consideration of the course(s) under review. The checklist draws upon guidance in the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education.

Before the Review Event

- Ensure you understand the University's procedure for Periodic Review and contact the Partnerships Team in advance to clarify any aspects of the process. Full details can be found on the [Partnerships Team website](#)
- Take time to read the documentation in advance and ask for any supplementary documentation or seek clarification on any points of ambiguity via the Secretary to the review Panel well before the event. Guidance on the areas explored during the Periodic Review are included in Section 2.
- Please provide your initial feedback to the secretary in advance of the event highlighting where you deem that any Areas for Consideration have been adequately addressed in the documentation. This will ensure that the discussions in the Panel meetings will be focused purely on areas that warrant further addressing.

9. Periodic Review Event

At the Review Event

- It is helpful to consider your role as a Panel member as that of a 'critical friend' who is there to discuss the course(s) in detail and offer helpful suggestions to the course team, as well as pointing out potential problems arising from your scrutiny of the review documentation.
- Aim to foster an atmosphere of constructive critical dialogue with the team rather than one of confrontation, for example by avoiding aggressive questioning styles that put the course team on the defensive and by endeavouring to highlight any positive aspects of the course(s) under review rather than focusing exclusively on areas of concern.

- Do not leave major concerns unvoiced - it is much harder to address these after a review event than before or during it.
- If you are a Panel member as a result of your subject expertise, please ensure that you are familiar with the appropriate QAA subject benchmark statement.
- External Panel members should be prepared to challenge assumptions held by the Partner Institution/course team, and offer a fresh critical but constructive perspective.
- Industry professional or employer representatives should offer a view on the value and relevance of the course(s) under review in relation to industry, the profession and/or employer needs, and give close consideration to any work placement, work-based learning or employment-related aspects of the course(s).
- The meeting with students should help you to form a more holistic view of the provision and allows you to ask about course delivery arrangements and learning and teaching from a student's perspective. The student experience should be a key focus of the Panel's considerations.

During the Periodic Review Event - Structure and approach

During a Periodic Review event, a Panel of experts explores key themes with the course team and makes recommendations for the re-approval of the course(s) under review. The Panel will hold some private discussions and will meet representatives from the course team and students. Additional meetings and tours of specialist facilities may be arranged depending on the course(s) under review.

The Periodic Review event may take place over a half or full day, depending on the size and nature of the award(s) being reviewed. The agenda, agreed by the Chair of the review, is normally based upon a standard programme which may be modified as appropriate for each review event.

A successful Periodic Review will be characterised by constructive dialogue, structured around a self-evaluation document (the Reflective Document) provided by the course team. The Reflective Document is designed to take the form of a critical commentary, cross-referenced to any other documentation provided, and should identify those issues the department would find it helpful to explore in greater depth. It should also offer the course the opportunity to highlight any areas of good practice to share more widely.

Additional documentation in support of the Reflective Document provides more details of the courses under review, including documents such as annual review of courses reports, external examiner reports, student survey results and course statistics. As a consequence, each Periodic Review will be slightly different, in order to both meet the specific needs of the course and to address any particular issues or concerns the Panel might have.

Student meeting

A meeting will normally be held with a group(s) of students registered (or previously registered) on the course(s) under review. The course team will not be present for this part of the review. As well as meeting students, the documentation will include summaries of NSS (or equivalent) results and actions taken by the course team in response, in order to provide a complete view of student feedback.

Course team meeting

The agenda will include one or more blocks of time in which the Panel may discuss the course(s) in detail with the course team, and in which the course team will have the opportunity to respond to points raised.

Outcome

After discussions, it is usual for the course team to depart to allow the Panel members to determine their recommendations. The Chair normally commences this private meeting of the Panel by summarising the issues and the course team's responses and they will conclude the meeting by agreeing the outcome of the event with the Panel before inviting the course team back for verbal feedback. A unanimous decision of the Panel is required for the conclusion of the review event.

During the feedback session, the Chair will announce the outcome of the event and notify the course team of any conditions and/or recommendations that should be addressed or considered. A deadline will be set by which the conditions and/or recommendations should be met and/or responded to by the course team. The Chair and Secretary will liaise to ensure that conditions and recommendations are circulated to the course team as soon as possible after the event, and the secretary will also produce a summary outcome report to circulate to the Panel and course team.

10. Periodic Review Outcome and Report

The Periodic Review outcome report summarises the Panel's conclusions and outlines the context to any conditions that are to be met to successfully complete the periodic review process. As well as areas for the course team to act upon, the Panel may make recommendations for areas the course team should consider. The Review Panel may not set further conditions or recommendations after it has reported. It is usual for the Panel to specify the date by which the conditions must be met and a response provided to the recommendations and advise when the course(s) would be subject to the next periodic review, which for most courses is five years.

There are normally three possible outcomes from a periodic review event:

- i. **Recommendation for the course(s) to continue to be offered**, in which case no further action by the departmental team is required
- ii. **Recommendation for the course(s) to continue to be offered with conditions and/or recommendations**, in which case the course team must provide the Chair with evidence, within any agreed timescales, that the conditions have been met, and must respond to any recommendations. The review Panel may not set further conditions after it has reported.
 - **Conditions** are those issues that must be addressed to the satisfaction of the review Panel prior to successful periodic review, by agreed deadlines or through the Annual Review of Courses Report process.
 - **Recommendations** are those issues on which action is to be considered, possibly beyond the start of the following academic session. A response to recommendations must also be made by agreed deadlines.
- iii. **Recommendation that Periodic Review process is suspended**, whilst the course team undertakes a major revision to the course(s) under review. This will only occur in very exceptional cases.

The Panel may also give **Commendations** which allow the Panel a chance to congratulate the course team on aspects of exceptional practice that can be shared more widely across the Partner Institution.

The Periodic Review report will be submitted to the Partnerships Education Committee to request the Committee's recommendation to Academic Quality and Standards Committee. The authority for final approval rests with Academic Quality and Standards Committee.

In addition, the Dean or Deputy Dean of Partnerships may refer Partner Institution-wide issues raised in reports for consideration by the relevant Partnership Management Board.

11. Course team's response

The course team makes a formal response to the periodic review summary report, by the agreed deadlines, evidencing how specific conditions have been met and addressing any recommendations that were made. This response is submitted to the partnerships team for onward submission to the review panel chair and the Partnerships Education Committee which monitors the response and reports to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee when conditions have been met.

The formal response from the course team should include:

- amended documents (using tracked changes to highlight any amendments)
- a brief summary of how each condition has been met with reference to the amended documents
- how each recommendation has been considered
- any other appropriate evidence.

Any revisions and amendments to the documentation should be mapped and cross-referenced to the new documentation.

When the chair of the periodic review panel is satisfied that all conditions have been met and that all recommendations have been responded to appropriately, they complete a sign-off sheet to confirm the periodic review decision.

12. Final approval

The Partnerships Education Committee considers the periodic review outcome report and makes a recommendation to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee that the course(s) be revalidated for delivery at the partner institution for a given period of time (usually for five year), subject to any conditions contained in the report being met. The Partnerships Education Committee subsequently reports to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee when the conditions have been met.

SECTION 2: AREAS TO BE EXPLORED BY THE PERIODIC REVIEW PANEL DURING THE EVENT

These questions are provided as a guide only and are intended to be neither prescriptive nor exhaustive. However, Panel members may find it useful to refer to these questions when reading the Periodic Review documentation as a prompt for possible lines of enquiry.

1. Progress made since periodic review

- Have the recommendations made at the last review or since approval/validation been met?
- Have changes to the course(s) since the last periodic review enhanced the course and ensured that the course design, title and curriculum remained appropriate and aligned with internal and external reference points?

2. Maintenance and enhancement of standards and quality

- Does the documentation demonstrate the course team's systematic monitoring, review and enhancement? How is good practice shared amongst those involved with delivering the courses?
- Have recent External Examiners been satisfied with the standards set by the award and achieved by students?
- How have regular student questionnaires and other forms of student feedback contributed to enhancement in relation to these courses?
- Are you satisfied that UK threshold standards are being achieved (see Section 3)?

3. Rationale and Market Demand, including Admissions and Student Recruitment

- Is the course compatible with the strategic mission of the University² and the Partner Institution?
- Is there a continuing market demand for the course(s) under review? Have targets been met? Are student numbers viable?
- Do the courses continue to enable students to acquire skills and knowledge which will be of use to them in their future careers?
- Have graduates been able to gain relevant employment?
- Are student entry profiles appropriate?
- Are admissions procedures fair and transparent, including those for dealing with Accreditation of Prior (Experiential) Learning (AP(E)L)?
- Are entry criteria clear and appropriate?

4. Course Design and Curriculum

- How does the course align with the University's Strategic Plan and its supporting Education Strategy³?

² <http://www.essex.ac.uk/about/strategy/>

³ <http://www.essex.ac.uk/about/strategy/>

- Do the aims and learning outcomes of the course(s) continue to be clearly defined and appropriate to the course(s)?
- Are there clear learning outcomes that appropriately reflect published QAA Subject Benchmark Statements, qualification benchmarks (for example for master's or foundation degrees), the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ), national occupational standards and any relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body requirements (see Section 3)?
- How has the course been developed over the last five years to reflect major developments in the discipline?
- How have changes in student and employer demand impacted upon the curriculum?
- How have employers/industry experts been involved in the ongoing development of the course(s) under review and what impact has this had?
- Does course design continue to take due regard for issues of equality and diversity?
- How has the curriculum been influenced by the research interests of the teaching team?
- For courses embedding work-based or work-related learning:
 - Is the work-based or work-related element of the programme relevant to the programme and its aims?
 - Do learning outcomes adequately demonstrate the integration of work-based or work-related learning and the academic programme of study?
 - Has there been continuing engagement with appropriate Sector Skills Councils?
- What impact has the course team's engagement with the University-wide Curriculum Review had?
- Is each learning outcome (subject-specific or skills-related) supported by appropriate elements within the curriculum?
- Is the curriculum content appropriate to each stage of the course, and to the level of the award?
- Does the design of the curriculum enable appropriate academic and intellectual progression by imposing increasing demands on the learner in terms of the acquisition of knowledge and skills, the capacity for conceptualisation, and increasing autonomy in learning?
- Is each course balanced, for example in terms of academic and practical elements and the breadth and depth of the curriculum? Is there a balance and integration between employment related skills and academic study?
- Is work-based learning embedded in the programme of learning, and does work based learning contribute to the overall coherence and integrity of the course?

5. Assessment

- Do assessment methods support learning? Are they appropriate, sufficiently varied and inclusive? Is the balance of coursework and examinations across the course appropriate?
- What innovations in assessment methods are under consideration or have recently been introduced?

- Is the assessment strategy adequately responsive to the varying needs and backgrounds of students (e.g. in terms of nationality or disability)?
- Are there adequate opportunities for formative assessment to support the development of students' abilities?
- Is achievement of every learning outcome assessed?
- Do the present methods of assessment provide adequate opportunities for the learning outcomes of the course(s) to be demonstrated?
- Are individual assessments weighted appropriately?
- Are there clear assessment criteria?
- Are External Examiners satisfied with assessment strategies and implementation in practice?
- For courses embedding work-based or work-related learning:
 - If employers are involved in the assessment of students, how do they work with academic staff? Are there systematic arrangements for coordinating such activity involving academic staff?

6. Learning and Teaching

- Are there appropriate methods of learning and teaching in place to enable students to achieve the intended learning outcomes?
- Is there a suitable variety of teaching and learning methods to meet the needs of a diverse range of students, including those with disabilities?
- Have developments in learning and teaching (either generally or in the particular discipline concerned) affected teaching on the degree courses under review over the last five years?
- How effectively do staff draw upon their research, scholarship or professional activity to inform their teaching?
- How is good practice shared among those involved in delivering the course?

7. Work-based learning (WBL) (if relevant)

- Are the arrangements for the management and supervision of workplace learning systematic and clear?
- Are mentors and employer representatives supported in understanding their roles and responsibilities (including assessment if relevant)?
- Are Learning Agreements in place to define the specific outcomes intended for the workplace learning, the responsibilities of the employers, students, mentors and academic tutors?
- Are appropriate checks in place to ensure the work-based learning/placement provider provides the learning opportunities necessary for the student to meet the intended learning outcomes?
- Do both the Partner Institution and WBL/placement provider give appropriate support to students during their placement?
- Is it clear who is responsible for WBL assessment, and is assessment appropriate?

- Are you satisfied that Partner Institution members of staff and employers understand and have consideration of their responsibilities under health and safety legislation?

8. Learning resources

- Are the learning materials relevant, sufficient, and readily available (e.g. library resources, reading lists; hard copy or web-based learning materials, VLE and IT facilities)?
- Is suitable learning and teaching accommodation available?

9. Staffing and staff development

- Have there been any staffing changes which may affect the delivery of the course?
- Is appropriate technical and administrative support available?
- Are adequate staff development opportunities available to support staff in terms of their professional development? Are there adequate opportunities for scholarly activity?
- Where employers are contributing to the delivery of the course, how are these contributions designed and integrated?

Additionally, for Postgraduate Research Provision (if relevant)

- What training is available for supervisors?
- How does the Partner Institution organise allocation of research students? How many research students are allocated to each supervisor?
- How many new and experienced supervisors are there at the Partner Institution?

10. Student progression and support

- Is the Review Panel satisfied with levels of student retention, progression and achievement?
- Are student feedback arrangements adequate?
- Are there well-designed arrangements for student induction?
- Are students provided with an appropriate level of academic support?
- Are arrangements in place to ensure that any additional needs of students are identified and reasonable adjustments are put in place to meet them?
- Are arrangements for tutorial support clear and generally understood by staff and students?
- Are Student and Course Handbooks and other information for students clear and complete?

11. Accuracy and completeness of published information

- What mechanisms does the partner institution employ to ensure the accuracy and completeness of published information (for example on its website or in

HE publicity material)? Are effective mechanisms in place to liaise with the University of Essex regarding publicity material?

- Are student and course handbooks and other information provided for students clear and complete? How is this audited?
- How will programme specifications and module outlines be published to students?

12. The Research Environment (for Postgraduate Research Provision)

- How does the course team create a research environment for its research students?
- Are the arrangements for supervision systematic and clear?
- Are arrangements for Supervisory Panels/Research Student Progress Boards clear and systematic and in line with the University's PGR Code of Practice?
- Are there clear progression guidelines and milestones?
- How does the course team support research students to acquire transferable skills? What research skills training is provided?
- What facilities (such as dedicated office space and equipment) are available?

SECTION 3: BENCHMARKING AGAINST PARTNER INSTITUTION, UNIVERSITY AND EXTERNAL REFERENCE POINTS

1. Introduction to internal (Partner Institution and University of Essex) and external reference points

Panels and committees with responsibility for consideration, approval and review (annually or periodically) of courses and modules have to be satisfied that they align with both internal (Partner Institution and University of Essex) and external reference points. These reference points include the University's strategic plans and external requirements set by accrediting bodies or the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).

In recommending a course to be approved for the first time, or to continue to be offered, for example following a periodic review, we have to be assured that we have confidence:

- in the continuing validity and relevance of the stated aims and intended learning outcomes of the courses, in accordance with relevant internal and external reference points
- that the award(s) conferred by the University are of an equivalent standard to comparable awards throughout the UK, and that UK threshold standards are being achieved

The tables below set out the internal (Partner Institution and University of Essex) and external reference points which apply, how they are considered and their impact on course and module design and approval.

2. Threshold academic standards

These are defined in the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education as 'the minimum acceptable level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for a qualification or the award of academic credit. For equivalent qualifications, the threshold level of achievement is agreed across the UK and is described by the qualifications descriptors set out in the national frameworks for higher education qualifications.'

Internal (Partner Institution and University of Essex) reference points

Reference point	Role and consideration of each reference point
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partner Institution Strategy ▪ University Strategy ▪ University Education Strategy ▪ Employability Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides direction, supports education, research and employability objectives. ▪ Taken into account in curriculum design (e.g. new/amended courses/modules; teaching, learning and assessment strategies).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning Information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Data to support course team planning processes and Annual Review of Courses. Reports include analysis on admissions and recruitment data, progression and award information, and student survey results (NSS and employability data).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ University Quality Framework⁴ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Policies and regulations for managing academic standards. ▪ Framed around five elements: Course/module approval; Annual Review of Courses; Periodic Review; External Examiners; Student feedback.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ University Regulations⁵ ▪ Framework for University of Essex awards (Rules of Assessment; Regulations for Taught Masters programmes of study; Higher Degree Regulations) ▪ Rules of Assessment ▪ Internal marking and moderation processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ These align with external frameworks below, to ensure our courses are comparable with national expectations and are delivered consistently. ▪ Taken into account in curriculum design and delivery (e.g. new/amended courses/modules; assessment strategies). ▪ Key reference points for decisions on student achievement and award (e.g. Exam Boards).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Summary of Academic Policy Decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Details changes to policy and regulations and is circulated to all departments and sections to ensure they are implemented.

External reference points

Reference point	Role and consideration of each reference point
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ QAA UK Quality Code for HE⁶ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Quality Code sets the expectations that all providers of UK HE education are required to meet.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ QAA Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies (Qualifications Frameworks)⁷ ▪ QAA Qualification characteristics statements⁸ ▪ QAA Credit Framework⁹ ▪ QAA Subject Benchmarks¹⁰ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The University's frameworks are designed to align with these frameworks and requirements. ▪ They set national standards, expectations and guidance for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the level of awards (e.g. level 6 - BA/BSc; level 7 - MA/MSc, Doctoral degrees – level 8) ▪ the type of award (e.g. foundation degrees; master's degrees) ▪ the title of awards (e.g. BSc / Grad Dip / MSc) and course titles/names (e.g. Economics and Politics or Economics with Politics)

⁴ <http://www.essex.ac.uk/quality/>

⁵ <http://www.essex.ac.uk/about/governance/regulations/default.aspx>

⁶ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/advice-and-guidance>

⁷ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/qualifications-frameworks>

⁸ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/characteristics-statements>

⁹ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/higher-education-credit-framework-for-england>

¹⁰ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code/subject-benchmark-statements>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ curriculum for specific subjects (subject benchmarks) ▪ credit frameworks ▪ how qualifications are awarded (i.e. against appropriate learning outcomes)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ External Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies that recognise or accredit all or part of a course, e.g. for membership or exemption from modules offered by the PSRB (e.g. the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), or British Psychological Society (BPS)). ▪ Requirements are taken into account in course design and in the regulations that apply to courses.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research Councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Our annual reviews and periodic reviews would account for any Research Council requirements / benchmarks where applicable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ External Examiners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ External Examiners play a key role in offering comparison against other HE institutions and national benchmarks. They're consulted over course and module developments, assessment strategies, and new course approvals. ▪ Their annual reports offer feedback at course and module level, and feed into Annual Review of Course reports. EE reports are summarised at department, faculty and institutional level.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ External academics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consulted as part of course developments and approvals ▪ Included on validation and Periodic Review Panels
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Employer / industry experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consulted as part of course developments and approvals ▪ Engaged in initiatives to develop students' employability skills and to offer placements

Document review information

Document owner	Partnerships Team
Document author	Rachel Frost, Senior Partnerships Manager
Document last reviewed by	Dawn Mott, Partnerships Manager (Development and Oversight)
Date last reviewed	February 2022
Review frequency	Annually